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WHITE PAPER

ON

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

JUNE, 1971

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PROLOGUE

This White Paper is intended to tell the interested reader about the Metropolitan Opera: how it operates, the audiences it serves, its finances, its fund-raising activities, its artists, its labor union arrangements, etc. The White Paper shows the complexities and the ever-increasing expense of producing the finest opera for hundreds of thousands of people (millions in the radio audience). In short, it is a fact book.

The reader who is not familiar with the activities of the Metropolitan Opera will learn some interesting facts. Some highlights are:

— 300 performances a year in 8 cities;

— approximately 1,000 employees;

— annual repertory of 25 different operas;

— 250,000-500,000 different people in the audiences during the regular season at the Metropolitan Opera House;

— 200,000 audience for the Metropolitan on tour;

— a current expense budget of $20,000,000 a year;

— ticket and operating income of $15,700,000;

— some 140 principal singers this year, representing the greatest operatic talent in the world;

— some 30 different conductors are employed in a typical season, including many of the foremost in the field;

— a complete symphony orchestra, chorus and ballet company;

— the largest opera house in the world, seating close to 4,000 people;

— 10-year average paid attendance at over 95% of capacity;

— ticket prices for regular performances as low as $4 a seat (lower for students) and as high as $30.00 a seat;

— $4,300,000 of annual fund raising required to meet this year's anticipated deficit;

— year-round employment for many artists and musicians (other than principal singers);

— 300,000 people listen to the Metropolitan Opera free of charge in New York City's parks in the summer;

— over 200,000 people, largely students, attend performances of the Metropolitan Opera Studio, a young adjunct of the Met;

— estimated weekly radio audiences in the millions listen to each Metropolitan Opera Saturday afternoon broadcast;

— 1,250,000 people come into the Opera House each year to see the Metropolitan Opera, visiting ballet companies, Guild-sponsored performances, and on guided tours.

These are just some of the important statistics which emerge from our study of the operations of the Metropolitan Opera. They are, to a large extent, the key to what makes the Metropolitan Opera one of the finest opera companies in the world, if not the finest.

The Metropolitan Opera is of priceless cultural value to America. It is the leading opera company in the United States. It has set high standards of performance that few companies anywhere can rival. Its programs to expand understanding of and interest in opera, as well as the discovery and encouragement of young talent, have been pioneering efforts in these fields. The Metropolitan's successes have reflected glory on the United States and it has enriched America's cultural life for close to 90 years.

The Metropolitan Opera is by far the largest performing arts institution in the United States, and in the world. With the performing arts generally in serious financial trouble in the United States, it unfortunately follows that the Metropolitan Opera also has the largest financial problem. Its annual operating loss has grown in 10 years from about $1,000,000 to $4,300,000. Despite some popular belief to the contrary, the Met does not have large endowment funds. It must attempt to meet the ever-increasing gap between income and expenses through annual fund raising efforts as well as by finding new sources of additional income. The Metropolitan is now exploring a wide range of projects in the television/film/cassette field in the hope that these will produce added revenue to the Metropolitan and its employees. It is cooperating with other constituents at Lincoln Center to obtain increased corporate support. A major drive for endowment funds sufficient to generate adequate income to help reduce the annual operating deficit will be undertaken. Finally, substantial support from major foundations and government at all levels is being sought.

The Metropolitan Opera is hopeful that a combination of all the above will help to meet the gap between regular income and the cost of producing opera at the Metropolitan's standards. The outcome is by no means certain, however. It is entirely conceivable that unless the Metropolitan receives substantial sup-

port from federal, state and city governments and major foundations, it will have to curtail or cancel some of its services to the community.

A small start in the way of government support was achieved several years ago when the City of New York commenced reimbursing the Metropolitan Opera for part of the costs of the free summer performances in the parks; the annual appropriation from the City has been $225,000. This year, for the first time, the New York State Council on the Arts granted $328,000 to the Metropolitan for support of certain special activities. An application for support from the Federal government has been filed, but because of the present modest level of authorizations and appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, we cannot hope to obtain the significant kind of support which the Metropolitan Opera must have to survive over the long term.

We recognize that in this era of competing claims for priority in allocation of private and public resources, a glorious historical tradition would not be sufficient basis for the Metropolitan's bid for support. But it is our firm belief that the Metropolitan's present activities and plans for the future justify substantial assistance from governmental and private sources. Details of these programs are presented in the chapters that follow.

Metropolitan Opera Association Inc.

CHAPTER I

History of the Metropolitan Opera

When William H. Vanderbilt, Ogden Goelet, George Henry Warren, members of the Roosevelt family, and others who had recently made their fortunes in railroads, banking and real estate got together to build a new opera house in 1880, little did they realize that they were founding a musical organization that would one day become one of the world's foremost lyric theaters.

Unable to get boxes at the old Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street—the operatic center of Manhattan for generations — they decided to build their own opera house "way uptown" on Broadway and Thirty-Ninth Street. And so the Metropolitan Opera was born. The first performance presented in the yellow brick building was Gounod's *Faust* on October 22, 1883. Except for one year when the house was closed for repairs after a disastrous fire in 1892, opera has been performed at the Metropolitan (both the old house and its new home at Lincoln Center) on a continuing basis for almost 90 years.

The founders of the new Metropolitan Opera were not interested in being opera producers. The risky privilege of presenting opera was let out, like a concession, to a variety of impresarios whose ideas were sometimes more bold than wise. Under the direction of Henry E. Abbey, the first season's loss was $600,000. Its equivalent today would be close to $6,000,000. The following season the directors turned to the Damrosches, father and son, who presented many Wagner operas during their seven-year regime. This was the beginning of an era with heavy emphasis on the German (Wagnerian) repertory; indeed, practically everything was sung in German. By the end of the decade, however, this policy was altered to meet the tastes of the time, and the new management that took over in 1891—Abbey, John B. Schoeffel and Maurice Grau—embarked on a policy that was to set the pattern for the Metropolitan's future: operas of all schools and in all languages were to be presented, and the finest singers from around the world engaged, including Nellie Melba, Emma Calve and the de Reszke brothers. From 1898 to 1903 Grau was the sole manager.

The last of the private impresarios was Heinrich Conried, whose regime was marked by the first American performances of *Parsifal* and *Salome,* both of which created sensations (though for different reasons). Conried continued to broaden the repertory and added to the Metropolitan's roster some of the greatest artists of that period—or indeed, of operatic history: Enrico Caruso, Geraldine Farrar, Olive Fremstad and Feodor Chaliapin.

In 1908, Giulio Gatti-Casazza began what is probably the longest tenure for the general manager of a major opera house: twenty-seven years. He brought with him from Milan Arturo Toscanini, whose electrifying conducting added glory to the Metropolitan for seven years. Caruso and Farrar continued their careers under Gatti, and the Metropolitan's roster in this era also included Emmy Destinn, Luisa Tetrazzini, Rosa Ponselle, Amelita Galli-Curci, Beniamino Gigli, Lawrence Tibbett, Ezio Pinza, Grace Moore, Lauritz Melchior and Kirsten Flagstad. The list of novelties and revivals presented by Gatti-Casazza over and above the standard repertory is amazing: 103 "novelties", and of these, 14 were American. He was the first to put on an opera by an American at the Metropolitan, and hardly a season passed without a search for and a production of a native work.

Gatti's painstaking efforts to make opera pay, and indeed to build up a surplus against less prosperous times, were the victims of the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the depression that followed. The surplus was wiped out very quickly, and in 1932 the Metropolitan was forced to announce that it had "insufficient funds to assure another season." The employees of the company and the artists agreed to take salary cuts, and an appeal was made to the radio audience —the Metropolitan started its famous Saturday radio broadcasts late in 1931—to participate in a nationwide drive for $300,000 to assure the continued presentation of opera.

It was also at this time that the Metropolitan Opera Association was formed to replace the old Metropolitan Opera Company. The new body acquired the assets of the predecessor group (excluding the real estate), but not its obligations. Furthermore, as an "educational" institution, it was exempt from federal amusement taxes, which made it possible to reduce ticket prices—an important consideration in those depression days.

Gatti's long reign came to an end in 1935, and the man appointed to succeed him was Herbert Witherspoon. He died a few weeks after taking office, and

he was replaced by Edward Johnson, a leading tenor with the company for thirteen years. Johnson faced monumental problems during his tenure. No sooner had the country begun to recover from the worst depression in its history than World War II broke out in Europe. His supply of European singers was thus cut off, and Johnson made a virtue of necessity by developing the enormous resources of native American talent. The list of Americans who gained prominence under Edward Johnson is long, and included such favorites as Eleanor Steber, Risë Stevens, Jan Peerce, Richard Tucker, Robert Merrill, Leonard Warren, Helen Traubel, Regina Resnik, Blanche Thebom, Dorothy Kirsten and many others.

Nineteen thirty-five saw the founding of the Metropolitan Opera Guild by Mrs. August Belmont, first woman member of the Board of Directors. Its purpose was to involve music lovers all over the country, to make the Metropolitan a truly national institution. The Metropolitan Opera National Council was formed in 1952 by Mrs. Belmont to promote nationwide participation in the work of the Metropolitan.

While Johnson struggled with his artistic problems, the Association in the summer of 1939 was faced with the fact that it could no longer pay its taxes (due to the refusal of some of its stockholders to pay the assessments levied on their shares). The only solution seemed to be for the Association to buy the building, and after much internal strife with reluctant stockholders, the proposal was finally accepted. A public campaign for $1 million was begun, to pay not only for the building itself but for certain necessary renovations and some operating capital. One third of the purchase price came from the surrender of bonds on the part of the real estate company which had held title since 1892. The Metropolitan Opera Guild was responsible for raising another third. The largest sum from a single source was from the radio audience: $327,000. Thus, in a very real sense, the Metropolitan Opera became America's opera house. The property on which the old Metropolitan Opera stood—at Broadway and Thirty-Ninth Street—is still owned by the Metropolitan Opera Association. The new Metropolitan is owned by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., but the Association has a 99-year lease on the building.

Johnson continued as general manager until 1950. The Metropolitan's financial situation improved by the late 1940's though practically nothing was spent on new productions. Some new and previously neglected works were given, but due to the financial limitations, Johnson did not have the freedom of choice his predecessors had. An indication of the restrictions imposed by circumstances of the times was the reduction in the number of operas in the repertory each season. Gatti at one time had 49 works in the season repertory, and in 1938 Johnson had 37. By the 1949-50 season, this number had decreased to 24. The length of the season during Johnson's later years was an average of 18 weeks. In Gatti's time the season had varied in length from a low of 14 weeks to a high of 24.

Rudolf Bing succeeded Johnson in 1950. Under his direction, the Metropolitan's season has been extended gradually from 18 weeks until today the regular New York season runs from mid-September to mid-April: 31 weeks. In addition, of course, there is the six-week tour, a summer festival at Lincoln Center of one to four weeks, and two or three weeks of performances in the parks of New York City. Several weeks are required for pre-season rehearsals. In substance the Metropolitan Opera is in operation the year round. The majority of the Metropolitan's artistic personnel is now on a 52-week per year contract.

From the begining, Bing has placed great emphasis on the dramatic and theatrical values of opera. Many world-renowned stage directors and designers have been engaged to participate in the preparation of new productions. Yet the principal feature of Bing's regime has been the presence on the Metropolitan's stage of every major singer in the operatic world over the past twenty years. Many European artists made their American debuts at the Metropolitan, and the number of Americans on the roster has continued to grow during Bing's general managership.

The Metropolitan's tradition of a large and varied repertory—approximately 25 works per season from the Italian, French, German, Russian and American repertories—has been maintained during Bing's regime. Works from the standard repertories in each language have been supplemented each season by new productions or revivals of lesser-known works by such great masters of operatic literature as Verdi and Richard Strauss, as well as by occasional efforts to introduce the public to contemporary or near contemporary operas, (*Wozzeck* was first presented at the Metropolitan in 1959). Several operas received their world premieres at the Metropolitan in this period (*Vanessa, Antony and Cleopatra, Mourning Becomes Electra*), while other operas were given their first hearing in this country by the Metropolitan (Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress, The Last Savage* by

Menotti, Richard Strauss's *Arabella,* and a concert performance of DeFalla's *Atlantida* in celebration of the opening of Philharmonic Hall).

An average of four new productions has been presented each season in a continuing process of replacing sets and costumes worn out by time and use. It was also in Bing's regime that for the first time in the Metropolitan's history a corporation became a sponsor for a new production. In 1963, American Export Isbrandtsen Lines sponsored a new production of *Aida,* and Eastern Airlines followed suit in 1967 with a commitment to sponsor the four operas in Wagner's *Ring* cycle over a period of four years beginning in 1967. Of the 78 new productions in the last twenty-two years, 60 have been sponsored by individuals or corporations.

Bing's decision to retire at the expiration of his contract on June 30, 1972, led to an extensive search for a successor, and in December 1970, Göran Gentele, director of the Royal Opera in Stockholm, was appointed to succeed Bing starting July 1, 1972.

Gentele will bring to the post at the Metropolitan extensive experience as an administrator (he has been general manager of the Stockholm Opera since 1963) as well as first-hand knowledge of opera production, having directed numerous productions of opera, as well as theatrical works, in Stockholm.

Gentele's first appointment since being named the next general manager was Rafael Kubelik to fill the position of music director. The internationally renowned conductor will begin his duties in the 1973-74 season, sharing artistic responsibility with the general manager in planning repertory and new productions, choosing casts and conductors, and supervising the orchestra, chorus and musical staff.

Although Gentele has been cautious about discussing his plans for the Metropolitan's future until he has had a chance to familiarize himself more fully with its complex operations, certain trends are discernible. Gentele has expressed strong sympathy with contemporary music, and while recognizing the basic conservatism of many opera-goers, will try to encourage them "to move with the times." Obviously he does not intend to use the Metropolitan for the presentation of experimental works by unknown composers, but hopes to stage works in inexpensive productions in smaller theaters in the Lincoln Center complex. Gentele's background in the theater and as an opera director naturally inclines him toward viewing opera as a theatrical experience as well as a musical one, and he intends to continue his directorial work at the Metropolitan, also because he feels it is a good way to get to know the staff.

Coming from a country with a strong tradition of government support of the arts, Gentele believes that the American government should provide support for the Metropolitan as a national opera company. To strengthen the Metropolitan's position in that respect, Gentele has said that he plans to make even greater use of American singers and other talent "because we can't ask the American people to support a company that doesn't provide opportunities for its own citizens." He has also indicated that he plans close cooperation with other American opera companies.

Finally, Gentele has expressed the hope that by removing some of the "conservative trappings" from opera-going, people can be made to feel that "opera is something to have fun with, to enjoy; that it is a natural and important part of their daily lives."

CHAPTER II

Opera at the Metropolitan

A. *A Typical Week at the Metropolitan*

To give an indication of the many activities that take place simultaneously at the Metropolitan Opera, the following table lists the performances and rehearsals that were scheduled for one week in December 1970. It is not unusual to have three different operas in rehearsal on a single day, with yet another opera performed in the evening. Except for the fact that one of the performances was a premiere of a new production, it is a typical week.

The second act of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier.*

A scene from *Die Meistersinger* by Wagner.

METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE SCHEDULE

Week of December 14, 1970

Monday December 14	Rehearsal:	Main Stage — Dress Rehearsal of *Fidelio* with orchestra Orchestra Room — *Orfeo ed Euridice* staging C Level Stage — *La Périchole* staging Ballet Studio — *La Périchole* ballet
	Evening Performance:	*Norma*
Tuesday December 15	Rehearsal:	Main Stage — Maintenance Day Orchestra Room — *La Périchole* orchestra reading *Orfeo ed Euridice* staging C Level Stage — *La Périchole* staging Ballet Studio — Body conditioning class
	Evening Performance:	*Andrea Chénier*
Wednesday December 16	Rehearsal:	Main Stage — *Die Frau ohne Schatten* technical Orchestra Room — *Orfeo ed Euridice* staging C Level Stage — *La Périchole* staging Ballet Studio — *Orfeo ed Euridice* staging
	Evening Performance:	*Fidelio* (Benefit Performance on 200th Anniversary of Beethoven's Birth)
Thursday December 17	Rehearsal:	Main Stage — *La Périchole* rehearsal Orchestra Room — *La Périchole* orchestra reading C Level Stage — *Fidelio* staging *Orfeo ed Euridice* staging Ballet Studio — Body conditioning class
	Evening Performance:	*Tosca*
Friday December 18	Rehearsal:	Main Stage — *La Périchole* rehearsal Orchestra Room — *Die Frau ohne Schatten* orchestra reading C Level Stage — *Fidelio* staging
	Evening Performance:	*Madama Butterfly*
Saturday	Matinee	*Norma* (broadcast over 111 commerical stations and 82 college stations in the United States and Canada)
	Evening Performance:	*Orfeo ed Euridice*

B. *A New Production*

Opera is the most complex and most expensive of the art forms. Confining ourselves, for purposes of this discussion, to the presentation of opera at major opera houses in the world, it is clear that no other theatrical experience requires so many people with such a wide range of artistic abilities as does opera. Singers, dancers, instrumentalists and conductor are only the most obvious of the elements necessary for an opera performance. Before the curtain can go up on a performance, however, much work must take place behind the scenes. What follows is an attempt to describe briefly what is involved in planning and staging a new production of an opera—at least, the way it is done at the Metropolitan Opera.

Planning begins at least two and more often three years in advance. The selection of a particular opera for a new production may be due to any number of factors: an anniversary of the composer (Beethoven's bicentenary in 1970 resulted in productions of his only opera *Fidelio* all over the world); a work that has not been done for a long time; a work from the standard repertory which is done every year and for which the sets and/or costumes have shown severe signs of wear and tear. (Some at the Metropolitan are more than 20 years old but are still serviceable; they take a great deal of punishment going to and from the warehouse, on and off the stage, and in transit during the tour.) Still another reason for a new production may be the availability of a particular combination of individuals (conductor-director-leading artist, etc.) whose participation in the production would give reasonable assurance of its artistic success. There are doubtless other reasons, but these should suffice for our purposes here.

Let us assume that for any of the above reasons, the General Manager has decided a particular opera should be given a new production. He will make some informal inquiries of principal singers, as well as possible conductor, director and designer, to determine their interest and availability for this particular production. Having assured himself that he can make a realistic recommendation, the General Manager takes his proposal to the Production Committee of the Board of Directors. Assuming the Committee approves, the next problem is to finance the production. That hurdle is overcome when a generous benefactor agrees to sponsor the work. A detailed budget covering every aspect of the production is then prepared.

About eighteen months before an opera is actually scheduled for its first performance, preliminary sketches for sets and costumes are received. These are discussed by the General Manager and his staff, and if revisions are necessary these are worked out. Schedules for the construction of scenery, props and costumes in the Metropolitan's workshops are made. Final drawings are due a few months later, and the work of recreating the designer's ideas in three-dimensional form begins. Everything but shoes and gloves is made in the Metropolitan's workshops by some of the most highly skilled craftsmen to be found anywhere in the world.

Approximately four weeks before the premiere, rehearsals begin. The job of scheduling rehearsals for singers is an intricate one because of the very different schedule of each. Technical rehearsals on the stage must be fitted in with other activities. If it is a production with elaborate and complicated lighting or other technically difficult aspects, more time has to be allotted for this phase of rehearsals than otherwise. In some cases, a special week for such rehearsals is provided for during the summer months when there are no performances. While these rehearsals go on on the stage, singers are preparing their roles with assistant conductors or coaches in one or several rooms in the House. Particularly in complex operas, involving difficult ensembles, the conductor will himself take over parts of the rehearsals to give the singers his own interpretations as to tempo, intonation, etc. It is not only the "first cast" that must be ready to sing on opening night, but also one or two "cover" casts which are expected to be able to step in at a moment's notice.

In the orchestra rehearsal room, the musicians are working under the direction of the conductor. The chorus and ballet (if they are involved in the opera) have been working on their parts for several months with the chorus master and choreographer; these rehearsals continue into the weeks just prior to the premiere.

The stage director begins working with the cast in one of the rehearsal studios before going on stage. He spends about a week discussing his conception of the production and plotting the actors' moves around the stage. Then, even while technical rehearsals are going on, the cast moves to the stage. Everyone is in street clothes. The rehearsal pianist plays so that the singers will move in relation to the music. In this early phase

of stage rehearsals, the singers spare their voices and sing either half-voice or speak the lines to concentrate on the dramatic action. Scene by scene, the opera develops as the director explains to his cast what he wants, often demonstrating movements to make his point clearer. As the singers become more familiar with the stage business, they feel freer to sing out and even with only piano accompaniment, it begins to sound like an opera. A week or so before the premiere, the orchestra takes its place in the pit. Singers and orchestra now begin to work together under the direction of the conductor for musical blending. The first of these musical rehearsals is known as a "sitzprobe," which in German means a rehearsal at which the performers are seated on the stage. Very soon thereafter the singers rehearse in costume, so that they will get used to moving in the right way in strange clothing. The stage is completely set.

The dress rehearsal takes place four or five days later, and tradition says that if all goes wrong then, the performance will be a great success. And then the evening arrives that all have been working toward: the premiere of the new production. Those actually performing on stage and in the orchestra pit that evening are only a small part of the hundreds who performed innumerable tasks to make the performance possible.

It is worth noting that no advances in technology can materially reduce the number of people required to perform these tasks. More specifically, machines cannot substitute for singers or musicians.

Martin Mayer, a long-time observer of the operatic scene, made the following comment about the complexity of opera production:

> "Of all human activities, with the one exception of war, an opera production brings together the greatest variety and disparity of talents and temperaments in search of a single goal. From the hammering together of sets to the hammering out of an ensemble, an endless number of activities must be performed in tempo, in collaboration, and well-nigh perfectly by all concerned. . . ."

CHAPTER III

Organization of the Metropolitan Opera

A. *Corporate Organization and Management*

The Metropolitan Opera Association, Inc., is a non-profit corporation chartered under the laws of New York State. Its policies are set by a Board of Directors consisting of 42 men and women elected by the Members of the Association (55 in addition to the Board). Members meet annually to elect Directors and to hear reports on the activities of the Metropolitan Opera.

The Board of Directors meets monthly. Directors are elected for three-year terms. The Board elects its officers at its annual meeting (held immediately after the Members' Annual Meeting). The Officers are: Chairman of the Board, Vice Chairman, President, Vice Presidents, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer. The President is the chief executive officer of the Association. All Officers and Directors serve without compensation.

The General Manager is appointed by the Board of Directors. He has the responsibility for supervising and managing artistic productions and the general artistic affairs of the Association, as well as administrative matters relating thereto. Assistant Managers are also appointed by the Board.

Standing Committees of the Association are: Nominating Committee, Executive Committee, Production Committee, Development Committee and Finance Committee. Committees are elected by the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.

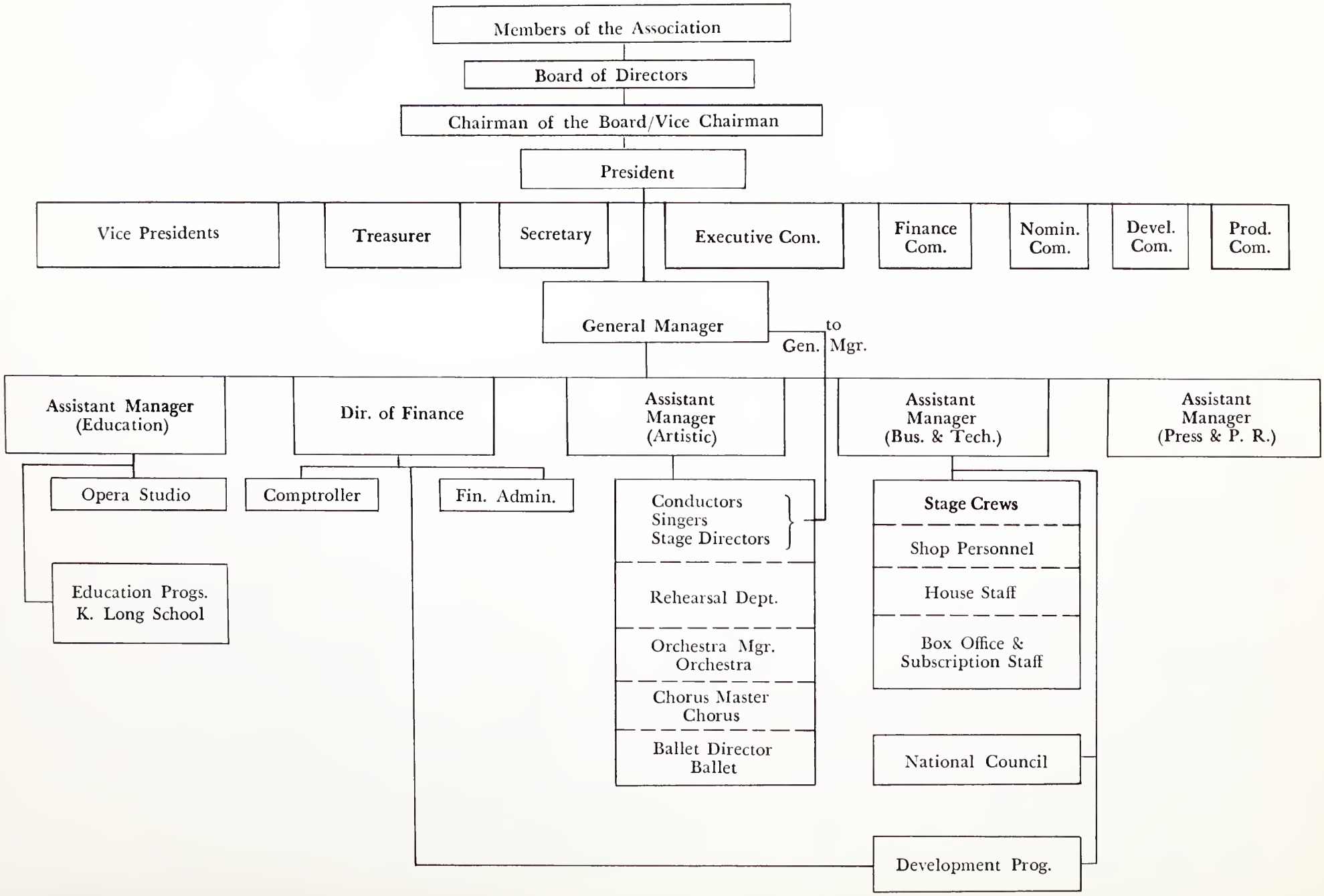
In addition to the Standing Committees, the Association at present has the following Special Committees: Benevolent Committee, Awards and Recognition Committee, Arts Committee, Television and Technology Committee, Government Support Committee.

A complete list of the Officers, Board of Directors, Members of the Association, and Committees for 1971-72 appears as Appendix A.

The Metropolitan Opera National Council is an integral part of the Metropolitan Opera Association and is under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Opera Board of Directors.

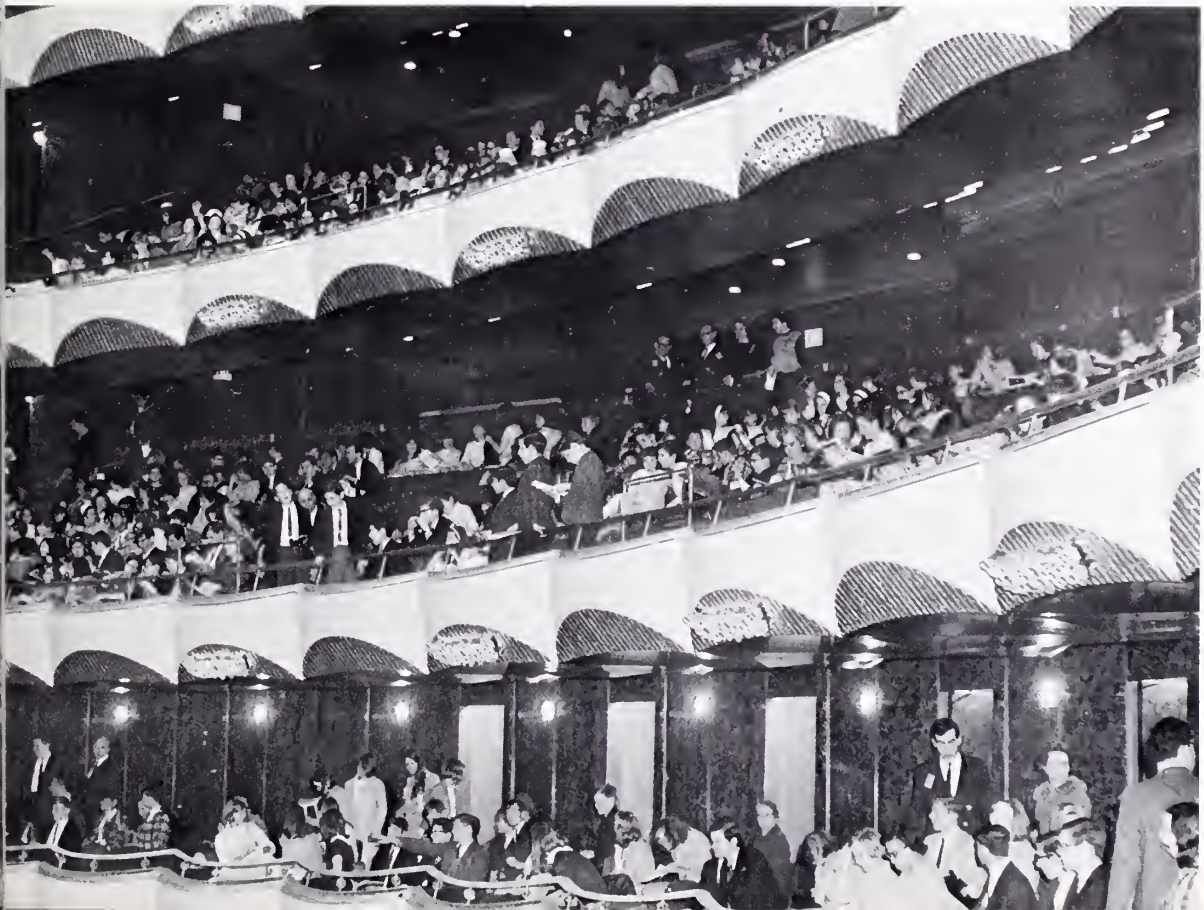
The Metropolitan Opera Guild, Inc. is a separate corporate entity but closely linked to it, as its very name implies.

Metropolitan Opera Association



The Metropolitan Opera's free concerts in the parks attract thousands of New Yorkers for each performance.

A student audience at one of the Metropolitan Opera Guild-sponsored performances in the Opera House.



B. *Employment Patterns*

The Metropolitan Opera has approximately 1,000 employees. Close to 80% of its total annual expenses are labor costs, and 90% of its employees are union members. A list of the fourteen unions with which the Metropolitan Opera has contracts is attached. Compensation rates are worked out on the basis of comparisons with prevailing rates in the industry across the city, as well as the prevailing rates among other constituents at Lincoln Center and other employees within the Opera House (*i.e.*, the employee benefits are the same for everyone).

Discussion of the Metropolitan's employment patterns will be divided along the following lines: (1) performers (principals, orchestra, chorus and ballet); (2) administration; and (3) stage and shops.

1. Performers

(a) Principal artist is defined as any solo singer, stage director or stage manager. The definition covers both the artists who sing major roles and those who sing smaller parts (comprimario singers). Almost half of the principal artists (singers only) are paid on a per-performance basis, the remainder on a weekly basis. Many of the former are engaged for only a few performances a season, while the majority of the weekly artists are engaged for 52 weeks including vacation. One important reason for the presence of so many weekly artists is the cover system at the Metropolitan: the need to have three singers available for every part in every performance (one scheduled to sing, and two to be available in case the first is unable to perform). This is essential at the Metropolitan because, unlike most European companies, it is impossible to find a last-minute replacement for an indisposed singer by borrowing one from a neighboring city. In Germany, for example, where almost every small town has its own opera company which plays throughout most of the year, it is possible to call a neighboring city to find a substitute for a singer. In New York, the Metropolitan has to rely on those artists under contract. This, of course, affects the payroll, since some of the artists who are engaged to "cover" several roles and must therefore be available, actually only sing a few times a year. The alternative to this system is to run the risk of having to cancel performances, and the Metropolitan cannot afford to do this except under the most extraordinary circumstances. The 1970-71 roster listed 136 soloists.

(b) The Metropolitan Opera has on its roster 28 conductors, associate conductors and assistant conductors. The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra consists of 91 regular musicians plus some extra musicians (used mostly during the New York season for the works requiring an expanded orchestra). Orchestra members play five performances a week. In addition, rehearsals are held three or four days a week, ranging in time from three to five hours per day.

(c) The Chorus consists of 78 regular and a few extra performers. Their work schedule, including performances and rehearsals, is basically the same as the Orchestra's.

(d) The Ballet consists of 37 regular and some extra dancers, working on roughly the same schedule as the Orchestra and Chorus.

Both the Chorus and Ballet have 52-week contracts; the Orchestra has a shorter guaranteed work year, but it is to be assumed that if the Chorus is working, the Orchestra will also be engaged.

2. Administration

This category includes senior management, subscription, financial, press, and other non-union personnel. There are presently 120 employees in this category.

3. Shops & Stage Support

(a) Carpenter Shop: (30) Construction of all scenery from wood, fiberglass, plastic and metal; major repair work of all scenery; major new construction work in the house.

(b) Property Shop: (7) Construction of all props; major repairs on props; repairs and maintenance work of furniture in Opera House.

(c) Tailor Shop: (32) Construction of costumes for all new productions; repairs and alterations of costumes.

(d) Scenic Department: (12) Painting of all drops, scenery, properties and costumes.

(e) Wig and Makeup Departments: (9) Manufacture, styling and cleaning of all wigs; makeup of principal artists, chorus and supers for performances and rehearsals.

(f) Wardrobe Department: (14) Maintenance, handling and cleaning of all costumes, including shoes, hats, jewelry for all productions.

(g) Electric Department: (48) Operation and maintenance of all electric equipment in entire theatre (backstage, office, auditorium, shops), including lighting switchboard, stage elevator and wagon systems, stage pipe systems, stage lighting equipment, and auditorium chandeliers.

(h) Stage Carpenter Department and Property Department: (88) Handling of scenery and props on the stage and in rehearsal areas; moving of scenery and props on and off the stage; repair and maintenance work.

C. *The Metropolitan Opera House*

The Metropolitan Opera is probably the best equipped and technically most up-to-date opera house in the world. Comparing the stage equipment, rehearsal facilities, backstage areas, and even some of the public areas with those of the old house on Thirty-Ninth Street makes one wonder how the company performed so effectively—even gloriously—under such trying circumstances.

The need for a new opera house was recognized very soon after the building on Broadway and Thirty-Ninth Street was completed—indeed, it has been said that the house was obsolete before it opened its doors. Lack of space was probably the major problem: inadequate rehearsal areas, dressing rooms, stage space, storage space, etc. The stage of course was totally unsuited to any modern production ideas. As far back as 1908 efforts were made to find a new home for the Metropolitan. Over the years many sites were examined and some were even acquired: a portion of land on which Rockefeller Center now stands was originally procured for the Metropolitan; various sites on Sixth Avenue, near Washington Square, on Fifty-Seventh Street, as well as Columbus Circle were once considered. It was not until the 1950's, when the concept of a performing arts center which would serve as a home not only for opera but also for symphony, dance, drama and related arts, took shape, that the Metropolitan's search for a new house seemed close to fulfillment.

It took 11 years from first drawings to the beginning of construction; 7,000 drawings were made. The 44th set of designs became the new Metropolitan Opera House. The cost of the building was $50 million. Wallace K. Harrison, the architect, had a long-standing relationship with the Metropolitan: he was first asked to draw up plans for a new house in 1929!

The exterior of the building is four times larger in cubic measure than the old house, and has 16 times more square footage on the ground surface. It is 451 feet long (equivalent to a 45-story skyscraper on its side). At the stage end, it is 234 feet wide; at the front, 175 feet. It has a height of 96 feet.

The auditorium occupies only one-third of the interior space of the building. The horseshoe shape seating was retained. The total seating and standing capacity is 3,973.

Although the dimensions of the main stage (103 by 90 feet) are approximately the same as those of the old house, additional side and rear stages create an area six times greater than the stage area on Thirty-Ninth Street. The main stage is divided into 7 sections equipped with movable platforms so they can be moved together or separately. Side and rear stages can be completely set with scenery for the following act and moved into place intact. These auxiliary stages can also be used for rehearsals. They are separated by sound curtains, so that four separate activities can go on at the same time. A turntable with a 57 foot diameter is contained in the rear stage.

There are 20 rehearsal rooms, three of them so large that they can be used to simulate performances before going on stage. Tailor, wig, make-up and millinery shops are on the same level as the rehearsal rooms. Other shops — electric, properties, carpenter, scenic studios—are located in other areas behind the stage. Offices are on the north and south sides of the building.

The considerable needs of the Music Library and the Archives are also provided for in the house. Among the other facilities not mentioned above are the Eleanor Belmont Room on the Grand Tier level; List Hall, in which the Saturday matinee broadcast intermission features originate; the memorabilia vitrines on the Parterre level, Founders Hall and the public restaurants.

It should be noted that the stage is in use 24 hours a day during most of the season in New York. After a performance in the evening, a night crew removes the scenery used that evening and brings up from the basement storage area the scenery for the next evening's performance as well as resetting for rehearsals the next morning. Rehearsals generally start at 10:30 a.m. and run until 3:30 p.m., after which the stage must be cleared and the scenery for the evening performance put in place. It is a continuous process of stripping and setting up for performance or rehearsal.

The House is actually in use throughout the year. The schedule for the 1970-71 season was as follows:

New York season	31 weeks	(September 14 to April 17)
Rental (MOA on Spring tour)	6 weeks	(April 19 to May 29)
June Festival (MOA)	2 weeks	(May 31 to June 12)
Rental (MOA in Parks concerts)	3 weeks	(June 15 to July 3)
Rental (MOA Vacation)	4 weeks	(July 5 to July 31)
Pre-season Rehearsals	6 weeks	(August 2 to September 14)
TOTAL	52 weeks	

This schedule is approximately the same every year, though slight variations affecting June Festival and Parks plans do occur.

Two dramatic moments from opera at its grandest: *La Gioconda* above and *Aida.*

CHAPTER IV

Activities of the Metropolitan Opera Outside the Opera House

A. *The National Tour*

The Metropolitan Opera's annual tour has been part of its historical tradition since 1883. It serves as an important link between the Metropolitan Opera in New York and opera lovers around the country, and is a vital part of the Metropolitan's role as a national institution. With the exception of four years, the Metropolitan has toured the country every year since its founding in 1883. The entire company—leading artists, orchestra, chorus, ballet, totaling about 300—takes part in the tour.

In the last few years, the tour has lasted for six weeks and included seven cities: Boston, Cleveland, Atlanta, Memphis, Dallas, Minneapolis and Detroit. As in New York, performances take place Monday through Saturday, with two performances on Saturday, for a total of 42 performances in the six weeks. Audience attendance is estimated at approximately 200,000 over the six-week period.

For the 1970-71 season the Metropolitan Opera received a fee of $48,000 for each performance given on tour. This fee is paid by individuals or organizations sponsoring the appearance of the Met in the various tour cities. These individuals or organizations in turn assume the responsibility for the sale of tickets. In 1971-72, it is anticipated that the fee will be increased to $51,360; but even with this increase, which was the cause of much concern to the sponsors in the various tour cities, the Metropolitan Opera will collect in box office income about $1,000,000 less than the tour costs (a loss of about $25,000 per performance). By allocating a portion of non-box office income to the tour period, this $1,000,000 excess cost is reduced to $600,000. This operating loss amounts to $15,000 per performance. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, the Metropolitan will continue the national tour for the foreseeable future as long as it is financially able to do so.

B. *Radio Broadcasts*

Just as the Metropolitan's annual spring tour has become a tradition, so have the weekly radio broadcasts on Saturday afternoon. Radio listeners throughout the country have had the opportunity to hear opera direct from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House since Christmas Day 1931. The sponsor of these broadcasts since 1940 has been Texaco. This 31-year association is the longest continuous coast-to-coast commercial sponsorship of the same program in radio history. The Texaco Metropolitan Opera Radio Network presently covers 218 stations in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and all of the provinces of Canada where the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts the opera on both its French and English networks. The broadcasts are now available to more than 95 percent of the radio homes in this country, to say nothing of the millions of cars with radios which can also tune in the opera each week. Audience estimates for the weekly programs are in the millions of listeners.

The Metropolitan Opera's Saturday afternoon repertory is scheduled so that the radio audience will have the opportunity to hear twenty different operas on consecutive Saturdays throughout the winter. Broadcasts generally begin early in December and continue through the last Saturday matinee performance of the New York season.

The intermission features—Opera News on the Air, the Texaco Opera Quiz and Biographies in Music—have become very popular parts of the broadcasts.

For many Americans, the Saturday matinee radio broadcasts have been a tradition in their homes since childhood, and to them the broadcasts *are* the Metropolitan Opera. The radio audience is a major part of the Metropolitan Opera's constituency.

C. *Recordings*

The Metropolitan Opera has been out of the recording field for more than ten years. The costs of making recordings in the U. S. are prohibitive for record companies, with the result that almost all operatic recordings are now being made in Europe. A number of record companies have approached the Metropolitan Opera again in recent months, and the possibilities of resuming activities in this area are once again being explored.

D. *Television/Films*

The Metropolitan Opera's ventures into the television field go back as far as 1948. In November 1948, and again in 1949 and 1950, the Opening Nights were

televised. Closed circuit telecasts were tried in 1952 and 1954. Unfortunately, these efforts proved to be neither artistic nor financial successes. The Metropolitan also prepared operatic segments for the Ford Foundation-sponsored television program "Omnibus," but this too did not last very long. Closed circuit television was tried again in 1955, with similar poor results. Another effort at presenting scenes of opera on television—this time on a commercial television program—also was short-lived. Most recently, a Japanese television crew filmed, direct from the stage, a performance of *The Barber of Seville* in 1968. The videotape has been shown in Japan with great success, though no commercial sponsor has yet been found for it in the United States. The possible use of this videotape in cassette form is now under study.

The Metropolitan Opera's management and Board are continually exploring possibilities in the hope that in the not-too-distant future this field will provide some much-needed income to the Metropolitan and its employees as well as bringing opera to new and different audiences. The success of the tape cassettes and the rapid development of the video cassettes make it more urgent than ever that the Metropolitan find some way to participate in this technological revolution. What the impact of these developments will be on the Metropolitan's financial picture remains to be seen.

A number of projects, ranging from film versions of operas to closed circuit television showings of opera from the stage to recordings, are being pursued actively at the present time, and it is expected that one or more will be under way or completed by the summer of 1972.

E. *Summer Programs*

1. June Festival

In the summer of 1971, the Metropolitan Opera presented for the third time a June Festival of opera at its home in Lincoln Center. This year there was a two-week season of non-subscription performances: 14 performances of seven different operas. Leading artists again participated.

In June 1969, the Metropolitan presented a one-week Festival, which was enthusiastically received by the public. The success of that venture prompted the management to plan a two-week Festival the following year. The labor dispute that curtailed the 1969-70 season necessitated a change in plans for the summer program as well. The scheduled two-week non-subscription Festival was extended to four weeks to help make up for subscription performances missed during the regular season. The added season was highly successful and popular. Something of a tradition has now been established, and it is likely that the June Festival will be a regular feature of the Metropolitan's annual activities for many years to come.

2. Outdoor Concerts

The Metropolitan Opera Association first presented a summer program of opera at the end of its annual spring tour in June 1965. For years the New York Philharmonic had been presenting concerts each summer at Lewisohn Stadium, but in 1965 its summer activities were to take place at Philharmonic Hall. The Metropolitan assumed the responsibility for the outdoor concerts, and New Yorkers by the thousands flocked to the Stadium that summer to enjoy the Metropolitan's leading artists in performances under the stars.

Since 1967 the Metropolitan Opera has performed in the parks of the five boroughs of New York City. Residents and visitors alike have been attracted to these free concert performances. During each of the past two summers, the Metropolitan has presented twelve concert performances of complete operas, with leading artists, full orchestra and chorus.

An estimated 300,000 persons attended the performances in the parks last summer. No one paid any fee or was called upon to make any contribution to the Metropolitan, notwithstanding the fact that the real cost to the Metropolitan in presenting these park concerts was $750,000.

In the summer of 1968, the concerts were sponsored by Pepsico.

As reported elsewhere, the City of New York has in the past supported these concerts with payments up to $225,000 per season. This represents approximately one-third of the cost. This summer, a $225,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts will also be used to cover part of the cost.

Despite this government support, the Metropolitan Opera will incur a loss of over $300,000 in presenting the free concerts. Scheduling problems, as well as economic factors, have necessitated a reduction in the number of concerts to be presented in the summer of 1972. At the present time, two weeks of performances in the parks are scheduled for next year.

CHAPTER V

Affiliated Organizations

A. *Metropolitan Opera Studio*

The Metropolitan Opera Studio was founded in 1960 with the assistance of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The Studio's immediate purpose was to bring live opera to schools in the metropolitan area to supplement the student matinees at the Metropolitan Opera House. These Studio productions are abbreviated performances to fit school schedules, and are tailored especially for the young. Another function also evolved: to help young American singers in their careers by giving them performance experience. The first opera performed by the Studio was Mozart's *Cosi fan tutte,* in English, with piano accompaniment. Among other works in the Studio repertory are Rossini's *Barber of Seville,* Donizetti's *Don Pasquale,* Ron Nelson's *Birthday of the Infanta* and Menotti's *Telephone.* In addition, the Studio has developed a variety of concert programs featuring music that is very rarely, if ever, heard elsewhere. The newest Studio production is Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi,* generously supported by a private benefactor, which is being heard in more than fifty performances with the Orchestra Da Camera during the 1970-71 season for the benefit primarily of school children.

Most of the students at Studio performances have never seen a live performance of any kind. What started as a modest experiment to bring opera to the assembly period has blossomed into an opera group which tours the Midwest, New England and New York State, goes to Bermuda, Iowa and Florida and many other places along the way. More than a dozen Studio-trained artists have been promoted to the Metropolitan, others sing in Europe, and in this country there is hardly an opera season anywhere without some Metropolitan Opera Studio alumni.

The great majority of the Studio's more than 200 performances per year are for the benefit of students located in more than 140 cities and towns throughout the United States. Table I (Appendix C) is an estimate of the composition of the audience during the past two seasons. Table II identifies the locations of the Studio's recent performances. It should be noted that the 1969-70 season was truncated as a consequence of the labor dispute which closed the main opera house for three months.

The Studio receives a fee for most of its performances. In addition, it receives financial support in the amount of $40,000 from Lincoln Center, and other contributions expressly designated for the Studio's use alone in an aggregate amount of $30,000. Nonetheless, the Studio operates at an annual deficit of approximately $250,000. During the current fiscal year, the New York State Council on the Arts has agreed to make a contribution of $103,000, leaving a deficit of $147,000 which will be absorbed by the Metropolitan Opera Association. It is estimated that the deficit for the Studio for the 1971-72 season will be at least as much as for the current year—$250,000—unless continued outside support is forthcoming.

B. *The Metropolitan Opera Guild, Inc.*

The Metropolitan Opera Guild, Inc., a nonprofit membership organization, was founded in 1935 by Mrs. August Belmont to promote greater interest in opera, to further music education and to broaden the base of support for the Metropolitan Opera. During the 1970-71 season, the Guild had approximately 70,000 members throughout the 50 States and in 60 foreign countries.

1. Opera News

Opera News, published twenty-seven times a year, is the leading opera magazine in the world (circulation of *70,000*). The focus of the 20 weekly issues between December and April is primarily upon the Saturday afternoon broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera House. The combination of the Guild's magazine and the broadcasts has helped to create an enlightened public for opera throughout America. In addition to specific information and photographs on the broadcast opera, each issue of *Opera News* contains special feature articles, news of recordings, a U. S. Calendar of forthcoming performances, reviews and reports of operatic events in the United States and abroad.

During 1970-71, *Opera News* focused on a variety of music centers and opera organizations and contained "salutes" to the San Francisco Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Opera Guild of Greater Miami and the Santa Fe Opera.

2. Educational Activities

Through its Education Department, the Guild presents an educational program designed primarily for

students and teachers. The program may be divided into four categories:

(a) special performances for students at the Metropolitan with reduced ticket prices;

(b) a student ticket department which provides tickets at reduced prices for regular Metropolitan performances;

(c) teaching aids, designed primarily for teachers but available to everyone; and

(d) other educational programs.

a. *Special Performances for Students.* Since 1937, the Guild in cooperation with the Metropolitan Opera Association, has presented special performances for students attending schools in the Northeastern United States. At first, attendance was limited to performances by the Metropolitan at the Opera House. However, in recent years, as the demand by students has rapidly expanded, the Guild has sponsored performances by the Metropolitan Opera Studio and arranged for students to attend rehearsals at the Opera House.

(i) *Student Performances at the Opera House.* The Guild presently sponsors seven student performances each year at the Opera House. The impact of this program is illustrated by the fact that during the seven performances in 1970-71, a total of over 26,250 students from public, private and parochial schools in New York City, Long Island, Westchester County, Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Maryland have had an opportunity to see performances by the Metropolitan of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor.*

(ii) *Student Performances by the Metropolitan Opera Studio.* Under the sponsorship of the Guild, the Metropolitan Opera Studio with the Orchestra Da Camera presented in 1970-71 52 performances of a new production of Puccini's one-act comic opera, *Gianni Schicchi,* in English. Fourteen of the performances were at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, with tickets priced at $1.50 each for students in all schools in the New York area. Students unable to purchase seats were admitted without charge. Thirty-two performances were presented in school auditoriums of Long Island and Westchester as part of the regular educational process funded jointly by the Guild, individual school systems and, as previously mentioned, by a private benefactor particularly interested in youth and music. Six performances were given in cooperation with the Saturday Theatre for Children and the New York City Board of Education in neighborhood schools; tickets cost 40¢ each and many students were admitted without charge. The total attendance for the fifty-two *Gianni Schicchi* performances with orchestra during 1970-71 was estimated to be over 42,000 students and teachers.

(iii) *Dress Rehearsals at the Opera House.* In 1970-71, the Guild with the cooperation of the Metropolitan Opera Association arranged for more than 8,000 students to attend eight complete dress rehearsals of the Metropolitan Opera at no cost to the students.

b. *Student Ticket Department.* The Education Department also assists students and teachers in obtaining tickets to every regular evening and matinee performance at the Metropolitan Opera House. During the 1970-71 season, more than 27,000 admissions—the equivalent of seven complete performances—were made available. Of these, 9,702 were $2.85 seats; 5,544 were score desks at $1.50 from which there is no view of the stage but for which vocal scores are provided without charge for following the musical performance. More than eight thousand tickets priced at $17.50 and $16.50 (orchestra seats) were sold to students and teachers for $8.00 each. Underwriting for these tickets was provided by the Guild and the Association.

c. *Teaching Aids.* The Guild's Education Department prepares and distributes a variety of educational materials for use by teachers and individuals. 35mm color filmstrips are currently available of 30 Metropolitan Opera productions. Each filmstrip consists of seventy or more photographs, taken during rehearsal and performance, which show the story of the opera in close-up. Filmstrips are accompanied by background notes and script. Teacher's Guides of four repertory operas are now available. Each Guide contains background articles on all aspects of the opera, piano-vocal arrangements with English text for classroom performance, and suggestions for study in related fields. An average of 5,000 filmstrips and 1,500 Teacher's Guides are distributed each season to schools, colleges, libraries and individuals throughout the United States. In addition, a Slide Copy Service can provide visual coverage of every Metropolitan Opera production, many of those at the New York City Opera, and selected productions of the

Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Rome Opera, Metropolitan Opera National Company and Metropolitan Opera Studio.

A great deal of the success of the Guild's educational activities must be credited to the cooperation and participation of the teachers and supervisory personnel in the schools.

d. *Other Educational Programs.* Among other programs which the Education Department has provided in 1970-71 are:

(i) An information service to answer all inquiries concerning opera and to provide assistance to other organizations with their educational programs.

(ii) A service which gave backstage tours of the Metropolitan Opera House to individuals and groups. During the 1970-71 season 125 tours were scheduled for some 2,450 visitors.

(iii) A Libretto Service which makes libretti available for radio listeners in advance of the Saturday matinee Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. Also available are libretti for operas not broadcast but in the season's repertory.

(iv) An "In-Service" course for teachers co-sponsored for the twelfth year by the New York City Board of Education. The course consists of a series of lectures on opera, a backstage tour of the Opera House and attendance at a live performance.

(v) A speakers' bureau which sends speakers on opera to any group making such a request.

(vi) A presentation at the annual Music Educators National Conference. At this meeting the Guild demonstrated methods and materials which music teachers may use in opera education.

e. *Special Services for Supporting Members.* A variety of services is made available to Supporting Members, including invitations to lecture-teas, an annual luncheon, receptions and working rehearsals. Supporting Members are also assisted in obtaining tickets and subscriptions to the Metropolitan Opera.

C. *Metropolitan Opera National Council*

The Metropolitan Opera National Council, founded in 1952 by Mrs. August Belmont, promotes nationwide participation in the development of the Metropolitan Opera as a national institution by:

(1) underwriting and administering a Regional Auditions Program to discover new talent for the Metropolitan Opera and to encourage and assist talented young singers in furthering their careers;

(2) sponsoring a Central Opera Service for the benefit of operatic groups, both amateur and professional, throughout the United States and Canada;

(3) financing new Metropolitan Opera productions or adaptations of current productions for use on the annual spring tour.

The membership of the Council, which consists of approximately 650 men and women who are cultural, civic and business leaders of their communities, extends from coast to coast, with representatives in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Australia and two provinces of Canada.

1. Regional Auditions

From one audition center set up in St. Paul and Minneapolis in 1954, the Regional Auditions program has expanded to 16 regional centers, 60 districts, and some 750 active volunteers.

Each year the National Council holds auditions, first on a district level and then on a regional basis. An average of 1,000 contestants are heard every year. The first place winner in each of the 16 regions receives a $300 award; the second place winner, $200, and the third place winner, $100, for a total of $600 in awards at each Regional audition. Some regions have additional local awards.

Twenty-two winners from the 16 Regions are selected to enter the National Semi-Finals in the spring. All expenses for the trip to New York and during their stay, including coaching by the Metropolitan Opera's musical staff, are paid for by the National Council. At the Semi-Finals, the young singers are given a stage audition (with piano) before General Manager Rudolf Bing and his musical staff in the Metropolitan Opera House. Ten are selected to enter the National Finals. These ten each receive a $2,000 award, and are given intensive coaching by the Metropolitan's artistic staff for a period of about two weeks. Again, all expenses for this period are paid by the Council.

The Finals take place before an invited audience at the Metropolitan Opera, with the General Manager and his staff serving as judges. Cash awards totaling

$4,000 are distributed at the Finals, and a possible Metropolitan Opera contract may also be awarded to one of the winners. Approximately 35 of the young singers who auditioned through this program are now on the Metropolitan's roster, and others are appearing with opera companies in this country and in Europe.

An Educational Fund permits the Council to aid past regional winners with further financial help if their progress warrants it.

2. Central Opera Service

Central Opera Service was established in 1954 to foster a closer association among professional, community and college opera companies throughout the country, to assist them in reaching ever higher artistic standards, and thus to encourage national interest in and enthusiasm for opera. It has become the nation's leading and most respected source of information on all aspects of opera. It services primarily three groups: (a) professional and non-professional opera companies, universities and libraries; (b) national organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Associated Councils of the Arts and the Business Committee for the Arts, and (c) the major foundations such as The Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, and The Twentieth Century Fund.

Central Opera Service provides its almost 700 members with information relating to repertory, productions, scores, translations, scenery, costumes, publicity, budgets and fund raising. Extensive up-to-date files on every aspect of opera are maintained for this purpose. To disseminate this information, Central Opera Service publishes a bi-monthly *Bulletin* covering events in the world of opera, such as new works and new companies, performance listings and feature articles. Special surveys have resulted in the following publications: Opera Producing Companies in the United States and Canada; Directories of American and of Foreign Contemporary Operas; American Operatic Premieres; Awards for Singers; Available English Translations; and Operatic Sets and Costumes for Rent.

National and Regional Conferences are held annually during which representatives at board, management and production levels have the opportunity to discuss mutual problems and to learn of the latest developments in the field, including such subjects as community involvement, audience development and finances.

A minimal membership fee entitles both organizations and individuals to receive all of the above services and publications. These fees, however, cover only a portion of Central Opera Service's expenses; the Metropolitan Opera National Council underwrites the program in the amount of approximately $30,000 annually.

Through its service to members, representing professional, semi-professional and amateur opera producing companies, educational organizations and arts institutions (both governmental and private), Central Opera Service has played an important role in the growth of opera in America.

3. New Productions

The National Council's annual contributions to the Metropolitan Opera Association have been used to underwrite fourteen new productions since the Council's founding in 1952. In recent years, however, because the Metropolitan Opera was fortunate in obtaining sponsorship of its new productions from outside sources, the Council's annual donation has been used either to adapt existing productions for the Metropolitan's spring tour or for general expenses in connection with the tour. The tour has always been of particular importance to the National Council because, by helping the Metropolitan to bring these productions to other parts of the country, the Council gives its members an opportunity to participate directly in the work of the Metropolitan Opera.

CHAPTER VI

Finances

In its eighty-eight year history, the Metropolitan Opera has always had to rely on contributions from its friends to help it meet the cost of presenting opera.

During the past ten years, the degree of this need for support has increased five-fold. In 1961, ticket and other income was $6.3 million, against expenses of $7.2 million. In 1971, estimated income will be $15.7 million, as against expenses of $20.0 million. Income has, therefore, gone up more than two-and-a-half times while expenses have gone up nearly three times. The gap between income and expenses was $900,000 in 1961; in 1971, it is expected to be $4.3 million.

Even though attendance over the past ten years has consistently averaged in excess of 95% of capacity, box office income at the Metropolitan Opera covers less than two-thirds of the costs. In an effort to reduce the growing gap between income and expenses, ticket prices have been increased several times over the past decade, but there are indications that prices may have reached a level where ticket sales may be adversely affected.

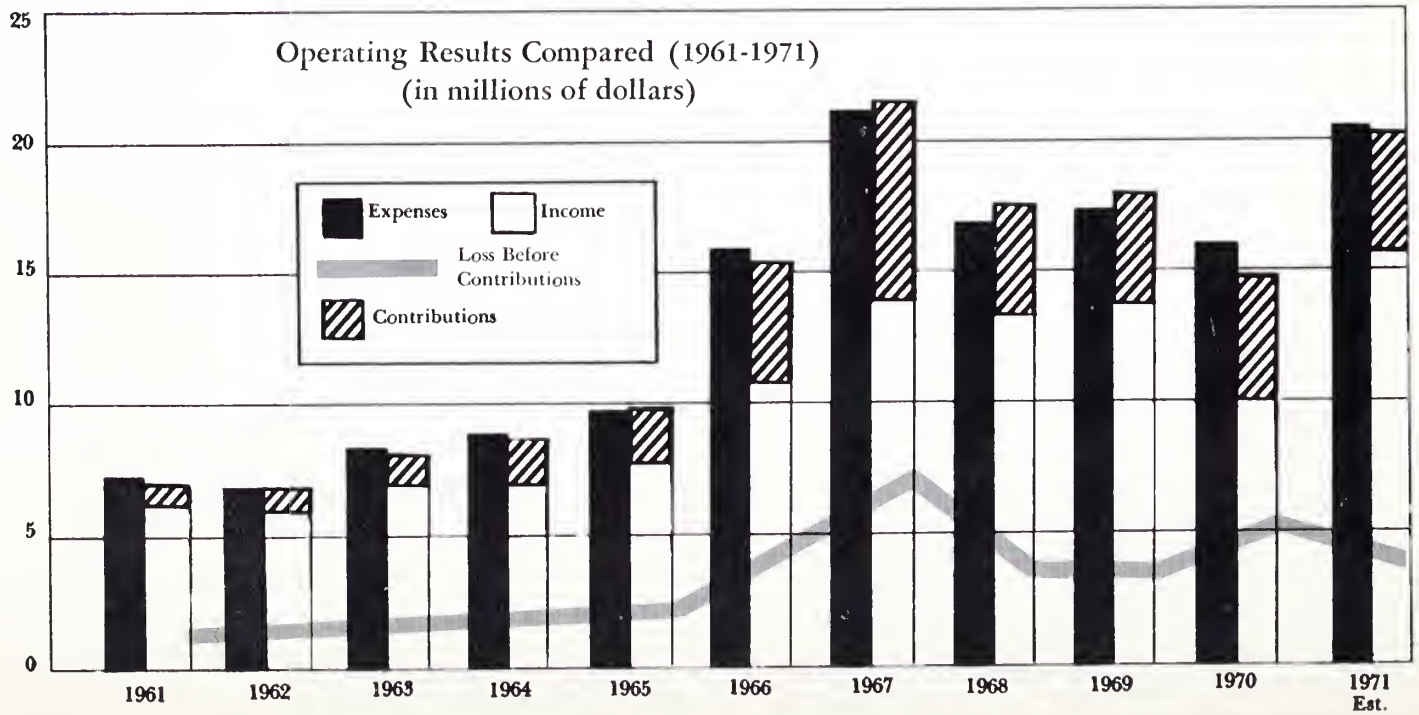
The traditional method of meeting the Metropolitan's deficit has been fund-raising from private sources. However, these contributions have been unable to keep pace with the increase in expenses experienced in the past two years and anticipated for 1971-72. A discussion of the financial operations of the Metropolitan Opera should make this clear. A ten-year summary of income, expenses and contributions follows; more detailed figures are given at the end of this chapter.

The succeeding pages deal with the various facets of the Metropolitan's financial situation. First is a discussion of sources and amounts of income, then an analysis of expenses. Contributions are discussed in the following chapter.

Figures used for the 1970-71 fiscal year ending July 31, 1971 are estimated.

Ten-Year Income and Expense Summary
($ Millions)

	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971 Est.
Box office income	5.3	5.3	5.9	6.4	6.9	9.7	11.7	10.9	11.2	7.5	12.8
Other income	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.7	1.1	1.2	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.9
Operating income	6.3	6.2	7.0	7.1	8.0	10.9	14.3	13.4	13.9	10.1	15.7
Payroll expenses	5.5	5.6	6.7	7.1	8.0	11.4	15.6	12.8	14.0	12.5	16.2
Other expenses	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.9	4.4	5.7	4.1	3.4	3.5	3.8
Total expenses	7.2	7.1	8.4	8.9	9.9	15.8	21.3	16.9	17.4	16.0	20.0
Loss before contributions	(0.9)	(0.9)	(1.4)	(1.8)	(1.9)	(4.9)	(7.0)	(3.5)	(3.5)	(5.9)	(4.3)
Contributions	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.6	1.9	4.4	7.5	4.2	4.0	4.5	4.1
(Loss) Income	(0.1)	—	(0.1)	(0.2)	—	(0.5)	0.5	0.7	0.5	(1.4)	(0.2)
Percent of expenses covered by contributions	11%	13%	16%	18%	19%	28%	34%	25%	23%	28%	20%



A. *Income—Sources and Size*

(1) *Box Office.* Only about two-thirds of the Metropolitan Opera's expenses are met by receipts from ticket sales. Yet the Metropolitan has played to substantially capacity audiences for years. Attendance has averaged 96% of capacity over the past five years, 96+% of capacity in 1968-69 and 92% of capacity in 1969-70. Although the percentage for the current year has dropped to 89%, this is still far better than almost every other opera company in the world. And yet even a capacity audience every night would not produce sufficient income to meet expenses.

In order to keep the gap between income and expenses within manageable proportions, the Metropolitan has been forced to raise ticket prices twice in the past three years. Tickets are presently scaled from $1.50 to $30 apiece.

There follows a table of the various ticket prices and the number of seats at each price at the Metropolitan:

SCALE OF PRICES

Location	Price Per Seat	No. of Seats
Orchestra, Rows A-V	$17.50	1102
Orchestra, Rows W-EE	$16.50	481
Parterre Boxes, Monday (center)	$30.00	128
Parterre Boxes, Monday (sides)	$25.00	92
Parterre Boxes, Tues.-Sat. (center)	$25.00	128
Parterre Boxes, Tues.-Sat. (sides)	$20.00	92
Parterre Boxes, Saturday matinee	$16.50 & $15.50	220
Parterre Boxes, Non-sub.	$17.50 & $16.50	220
Grand Tier, Rows A-C	$17.50	162
Grand Tier, Rows D-G	$16.50	220
Grand Tier Boxes	$16.50	60
Grand Tier Boxes, Sat. matinee	$14.00	60
Dress Circle	$10.75	386
Dress Circle Boxes	$ 9.75	68
Balcony	$ 7.75	362
Balcony Boxes	$ 6.50	80
Family Circle, Rows A-H	$ 5.50	419
Family Circle, Rows I-K	$ 4.00	172
Family Circle Boxes (students only)	$ 2.85	42
Score Desks (students only)	$ 1.50	24
GENERAL ADMISSION (Standing Room)		
Orchestra	$ 2.85	100
Family Circle	$ 1.75	75

The question remains, however, as to whether the Metropolitan can continue indefinitely to raise its ticket prices without reducing its very high percentage of occupied seats. The percentage of occupancy for the 1970-71 season, in which a 20% increase in ticket prices was put into effect, slipped 5% below recent year averages for the Opera. Moreover, it seems obvious that the Metropolitan will never realistically be able to price its tickets at a level which will meet costs. Assuming full capacity, the average price per ticket to meet the full costs of a performance (rather than the present two-thirds) would have to be 50% higher. If a price range per ticket similar to that which currently prevails were to be adopted, the top ticket price for box seats would have to be $45 and orchestra tickets would need to be increased to

$26. In fact, rather than increasing ticket prices, it would appear to be in the best interests of the Metropolitan and all citizens of New York and the United States interested in the accessibility of the arts to the people—if economics permitted—that ticket prices be reduced.

One factor explaining the Opera's success in maintaining a high percentage of audience attendance, despite relatively high ticket prices, is the subscription system. Under this system, tickets are sold to a series of performances during the season, rather than on an individual performance basis. The subscription system has frequently been attacked as exclusionary and unfair, restricting tickets to those who can afford the relatively high initial outlay for tickets, and leaving few for the general public. This criticism, however, fails on two grounds. First, the percentage of seats subscribed during the current year (1970-71) is 64%, leaving 36% of seats available for sale at the box office or by mail for the average subscription performance during the regular season. In addition, there were 11 nonsubscription performances scheduled during the year, which meant that almost 3,800 seats were available for sale to the public for each of these performances. When these 11 performances are included in the calculation of unsubscribed seats, the percentage of seats available to the non-subscriber public rose to 40%.

The second point is that while there are some 20,000 subscribers on the Metropolitan's list, the number of people actually participating in these subscriptions is probably closer to 50,000. The explanation for this is that most subscribers share their tickets with friends or relatives, so that while one couple may be the subscriber on our books, there may be as many as two or three other couples sharing the subscription. It is therefore impossible to determine the exact number of different opera-goers per season, but it is estimated that between 250,000 and 500,000 different people attend performances at the Metropolitan Opera during the regular season.

It is worth noting that over the last twenty-two years, a continuing effort has been made to broaden the subscription audience by adding to the number of series and reducing the number of performances per series. In the 1949-50 season, there were 6 subscription series, with 14 to 18 performances in each, and 5,000 subscribers. Today, there are 22 different subscription series, ranging from 6 to 10 performances, and some 20,000 subscribers.

The overriding reason for maintaining the subscription system, however, is a financial one. The Metropolitan Opera relies on the security of its subscription income to help it through the summer rehearsal period before receipt of single sale box office income; this is the major and only assured source of income in that period. If the Metropolitan were to give up subscriptions, it would not only risk that assured source of income but also lose the very substantial voluntary contribution that subscribers have traditionally made and which accounts for a substantial part of the contributions budget each year.

(2) *Endowment and Other Income.* The general endowment of the Metropolitan Opera totaled $786,000 at June 30, 1970. Since then, two bequests have been received, one of $1 million and another of $5 million, which will substantially improve the amount of income received from the fund. Funds included in the endowment are held in the Metropolitan Opera Endowment Trust Fund and consist of bequests and gifts from various sources. The Opera received $32,000 in income from its endowment fund during the past fiscal year. In addition, the Opera derives income as lessor of an office building erected on the site of the former Metropolitan Opera House. Under the net lease agreement which expires in 2016, the Metropolitan currently receives annual rental income of $400,000 which will increase in stages to $600,000 in the year 2006. Although current income from these sources is a valuable contribution to the Metropolitan's operations, these modest resources cannot possibly answer the Metropolitan's financial problems.

B. *Expenses*

The chart set out below illustrates the relationship of various expenditures as estimated for 1970-71. This pattern has been true for the last ten years.

ESTIMATE

1970-71 ($ Millions)

INCOME

Operating 79%	Box Office	63%	$12.8
	Other Income	16%	$ 2.9
Contributions 21%	Contributions	21%	$ 4.1
	Total Income	100%	$19.8

EXPENSES

Payroll 81%	Artistic 43%	Singers	20%	$ 4.0
		Orchestra	10%	2.0
		Chorus and Ballet	7%	1.5
		Direction and Other	6%	1.2
	Stage Support 18%	Stage	7%	1.4
		Shops	6%	1.2
		Electrical	5%	1.0
	Building Operations		6%	1.1
	Administration and Staff		7%	1.4
	Employee Benefits		7%	1.4
Non-Payroll 19%	Scenery and Costumes		3%	0.6
	Transfer and Travel		5%	1.0
	Building Operations		5%	1.0
	Administrative Services and All Others		6%	1.2
	Total Expenses		100%	$20.0

(1) *Payroll Expenses.* As shown above, 81% of the Metropolitan's expenses—$16.2 million out of $20.0 million—are payroll costs. Salaries for artistic personnel make up the largest element in those costs: $8.7 million. Nearly one half of the artistic payroll—$4.0 million—represents the cost of engaging principal singers. This category includes both the artists engaged on a weekly basis and those on a per-performance basis.

In addition to the estimated $4.0 million payroll for singers for 1970-71, payroll costs for Orchestra, Chorus and Ballet, and Direction are expected to total

$4.7 million for the current fiscal year. Of this figure, the Orchestra payroll is estimated at $2.0 million, Chorus and Ballet at $1.5 million, and Direction and other at $1.2 million.

The top fee for a single performance at the Metropolitan is $4,000 (a substantial part of which is withheld for U. S. taxes). European opera houses frequently not only pay higher performance fees but also arrange for lower tax rates for the artists. Although specific figures are not available for other opera companies, it is generally assumed that other American opera companies outside New York pay substantially higher top fees for single performances than does the Metropolitan. The reputation of the Metropolitan, and the prestige of appearing on its stage, often induce world-renowned performers to accept lower per-performance fees than they would get elsewhere.

Two points are worth emphasizing with respect to payroll costs for singers. It is the experience of operatic life and economics that it is the "expensive" artist that sells out the house. This has been proven over and over again; the money saved by engaging a less highly paid artist for a performance is not equal to the amount lost at the box office because the "star" is not appearing that evening. The "star" is the one the public comes to hear. Another important factor is the so-called cover system—the practice of paying more than one singer to be available to perform a single role at a given performance. Nevertheless, cover system costs amount to only 5% of the total costs of providing singers for the Metropolitan.

Another important determinant in the artistic costs of the Metropolitan is the employment of chorus and ballet personnel for a full 52 weeks a year. The decision to put these employees on a 52-week basis was first made in 1964, and has greatly increased the costs to the Metropolitan. Without taking into account increases in salaries, the extension in employment added $2.7 million per year in payroll costs to the budget. On the other hand, this decision had extremely desirable effects in that it gave the Metropolitan flexibility in making its performances available to a greater segment of the public. It made possible the addition of the June Festival and led to the expansion of its program of free opera performances in the parks.

Salaries for support personnel necessary to the staging of performances—stagehands, craftsmen and painters who design and make scenery, and electricians who operate the electrical machinery and provide the lighting—are estimated at $3.6 million for 1970-71.

Approximately $1.1 million represents compensation of employees required for maintenance, upkeep and security for the Opera House.

Union contracts negotiated with all of the above groups at the beginning of the 1969-70 season called for cumulative increases of approximately 25% over the three-year period of the contract ending in 1972. This alone will increase costs in the 1971-72 season by approximately $1 million over the 1970-71 season.

Payroll expenses for administrative and staff personnel are expected to total $1.4 million in 1970-71. These personnel are involved in directing the operations of the company, arranging schedules, hiring the artists, seeing that "the show goes on," financial management, ticket sales, publicity, and other necessary functions of an organization of the size and complexity of the Metropolitan. Although these latter personnel are not covered by union contracts, their salary costs will also have increased 25% during the three years ending in 1972.

(2) *Non-Payroll Expenses.* Of the almost 20% of the Metropolitan's expenses not attributable to direct or indirect payroll costs, approximately 3% of total costs—$600,000 estimated for 1970-71—is spent on acquisition and maintenance of scenery and costumes. This represents a relatively small part of the entire budget for the Metropolitan and appears well controlled, considering the presentation of as many as 25 different operas in any one season.

Another 5% of total costs, or $1.0 million, is the estimated cost of travel and *per diem* during the national tour and the movement of sets and costumes from warehouses to the Opera for performances. The expenses of moving a company the size of the Metropolitan (about 300 people) to the seven cities it visits on its annual tour are perforce quite high, particularly in relation to the limited revenue which can be achieved from performances. Nevertheless, the Metropolitan has considered this transportation expense a necessary one if the finest opera available in the United States is to be accessible on a broad scale. Because of the increases in the costs of transportation announced recently, it is projected that costs of transfer and travel may increase 10% to $1.1 million in the coming season.

Another 5% of total costs, or $1 million, represents the non-payroll costs of maintenance and operation of the Opera House. This includes the Metropolitan's

share of the common expenses for heating, lighting, air conditioning, external security, and other necessary expenses incurred by Lincoln Center, as well as the particular costs of cleaning and other materials for the upkeep of the Opera House. Because of the economies realizable through the Lincoln Center concept of central management, the increase in this area of the Opera's expenses has been minimized. Nevertheless, the move to a larger, more modern and more complex physical plant has doubled the house maintenance and operating costs compared with expenses for similar items in the old Opera House. This and other comparative data is brought out in detail in the ten-year summary on p. 19.

The remaining 6% of the Metropolitan's expenses cover a variety of categories including royalties, booking and publicity for performances, administration and other overhead costs.

CHAPTER VII

Fund Raising

The Metropolitan Opera has in the past met its operating losses through fund raising activities aimed primarily at its patrons and opera lovers generally and, since 1966, at large business firms as well. The response of faithful supporters even in periods of serious financial crisis such as attended the move to Lincoln Center in the 1966-67 season, has always been sufficient to prevent a curtailment of operations and financial disaster. As shown on page 19, the total amount of outside support has increased dramatically over the past 10 years—from $845,000 in 1961 to $4.1 million estimated for the current season—and the percentage of expenses covered has also been in an upward trend —from 11% in 1961 to 20% in 1971.

Although the Metropolitan has and will continue to use all means at its disposal to increase annual contributions from its fund-raising activities, projected increases in the deficit just cannot be met in this way.

In more recent years, restricted funds have been made available for specific activities by the City of New York and for the 1970-71 season by the New York State Council on the Arts. In addition, contributions have been made for specific purposes by foundations, individuals and corporate sponsors which have funded expansion of the Opera's activities. Although these restricted contributions are most helpful in assisting the Metropolitan to undertake activities which help it reach a broader audience, they have in some cases increased the overall deficit and in no cases aided in reducing it.

A. *Contributions From Private Sources*

Approximately 38% of all contributions to the Metropolitan Opera are made through the Patrons program administered by the Development Committee. Under the Patron program, a total of nearly 800 Individual Patrons (as of December 31, 1970) have agreed to contribute $1,000 or more annually, and over 100 Company Patrons have agreed to contribute $2,500 or more annually. Patrons of the Opera contributed $1.5 million during the 1968-69 season and $1.8 million during the 1969-70 season. The Development Committee is continually exploring every means of increasing the number and size of the contribution of its Patrons. For the first time this year, a combined approach to corporations on behalf of all Lincoln Center constituents is being tried. It is hoped that this joint effort will not only result in more corporate patrons for Lincoln Center but also in larger gifts than the individual fund-raising programs were able to obtain. Whereas last year's total of all corporate support to constituents amounted to $872,000, the goal for the combined campaign this year is $1.5 million, and Lincoln Center officials are optimistic that this figure will be reached. The Patron program represents an organized, ongoing effort to promote contributions to the Opera and has had remarkable success in increasing contributions in every year of its existence. Moreover, the Patrons have provided a strong base on which to launch emergency fund raising efforts such as that which brought in over $3 million dollars in additional contributions during the 1967 season to meet the extraordinary costs of moving to the new Opera House at Lincoln Center. Although the Patrons have and can be expected to continue to respond most generously to emergencies in any given season, the deficits expected in the coming years amount to a continual crisis which is beyond the capability of the most ambitious fund-raising program.

The next largest source of contributions to the Opera, accounting for nearly 18% of all contributions in the 1968-1969 season and 16% in 1969-1970, is voluntary contributions made by subscribers. The Metropolitan asks each subscriber to contribute voluntarily 20% of the cost of his subscription series each year. In 1970-71, 63% of subscribers made the requested contribution, resulting in contributions of $643,000. This represented just under 10% of the total subscription value. For the 1969-70 season, contributions totaled $712,000, representing 11.5% of total subscription value. The generosity of subscribers is further evidenced by the response to the Opera's special appeal during the 1969-1970 season that subscribers contribute the cost of tickets for performances canceled due to the late opening of the season. Contributions totaling $583,000, over 20% of the total value of canceled tickets, were made in response to this appeal. It is hoped that contributions from subscribers can be increased, but the possibilities in this direction are limited.

The Metropolitan also receives annual contributions from its affiliated organization, the Metropolitan Opera Guild and the National Council. Both organizations raise funds through membership dues and the Guild also holds benefit performances. A substantial portion of the revenue of both organizations, $100,000 in 1969 and in 1970 for the National Council and $380,000 in 1969 and $326,000 in 1970 for the Guild are contributed to the Metropolitan. Increases in the level of support from both the Guild and the National Council are anticipated in the future, but both organizations are faced with increasing costs for their own activities, and their ability to add to their contributions to the Metropolitan will depend on their ability to attract new members, reduce unnecessary expenses and find new means of raising funds for the Opera.

Another significant source of financial support to the Metropolitan is funds which have been made available for specific purposes. Included in this category are donations made for new productions, the Belmont Fund to underwrite student performances, a Ford Foundation grant to permit expanded operations, and several large contributions for various Metropolitan Opera activities such as the Metropolitan Opera Studio. For example, the Metropolitan received $780,000 in new production funds in 1970-71, $350,000 in 1969-70, and $697,000 in 1968-69. Although a welcome source of funds for operations, these restricted contributions cannot provide a significant solution to the Opera's fiscal problems. Contributions for new productions, for instance, have only defrayed the actual physical costs of creating, designing and mounting a new production; they have not covered rehearsal costs or administrative overhead. The Ford Foundation grant has given the Opera the opportunity to expand its operations. However, the costs of these programs have greatly surpassed the amount of the grant. Specific purpose contributions are necessary and desirable supplements to the income of the Opera, but unless closely matched to the costs of the operations they promote or renew, they provide no real solution to the problem of increased costs.

B. *Governmental Support—A Beginning*

Since its 1967 season, the Metropolitan has received annual support from the City of New York to help defray the costs of concerts in the parks ($225,000 each in 1967 and 1968, and $190,000 each in 1969 and 1970). Although these funds represent only one-fourth to one-third of the total cost of the park concerts, they are a welcome recognition on the part of the City of the importance of government support to the arts.

It should perhaps also be pointed out that cultural centers in other cities, and even private museums in New York such as the Metropolitan Museum, receive substantial support from municipal governments for maintenance of the buildings and grounds. The Metropolitan Opera does not. Yet it is a public building which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Part of the expense of maintaining the building is due to this influx of daily tourists, and it would therefore be entirely proper for the City of New York to assume part of the costs of maintaining the house.

In September 1970, the New York State Council on the Arts granted $328,000 to the Opera to further defray the costs of park concerts in New York City and to support Metropolitan Opera Studio performances throughout New York State. Availability of funds from the Council in the future and any increase in such funds is dependent on the continued appropriation of funds for the Council by the New York State Legislature.

Regrettably, none of the funds appropriated by the City or State have been designated for the Metropolitan's principal activity: presentation of opera at Lincoln Center.

Application has been made to the National Endowment for the Arts for support, but as of the date of

Semi-Finalists in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Regional Auditions.

The audience at the Metropolitan's first performance in the house at Lincoln Center

this White Paper, no definite word has been received. The amount the Metropolitan Opera might receive is of course dependent on the level of Congressional appropriations for the Endowment.

Although the grants from the City and State of New York have been substantial steps in the right direction, they suffer from the same infirmities as long-range fiscal solutions as restricted grants: grants for specific purposes do not meet the full costs of the operations which they support, and there is no assurance that the grants will continue or increase with the costs incurred to qualify for the grants. For the summer of 1971, assuming that the City of New York provides the $225,000 requested for Park Concerts and using the $225,000 of the Arts Council grant earmarked for this purpose to defray the costs of Park Concerts, the Opera will still incur a deficit of approximately $300,000 in presenting these performances. Concurrently, applying the remaining State funds ($103,000) to defray the costs of Studio performances, the Opera will incur a loss of $155,000 on this sector of its activities.

In short, although government has made a start in recognizing its role in helping to meet deficits of artistic organizations such as the Metropolitan, no recognition of the magnitude of the problem has as yet been demonstrated. As we hope we have demonstrated in this White Paper, the gap between operating expenses of an institution such as the Metropolitan Opera and what it is able to obtain in ticket sales and fund raising will surely continue to widen. It is this overall gap which should be the focus of concern rather than the component deficit of specific programs. If the Metropolitan Opera does not survive as an institution, there cannot be any auxiliary programs.

C. *Financial Aid to the Arts—New Directions*

As has already been suggested, a new approach to financial aid to the arts is needed. Grants tied to specific programs or projects are no longer the answer to the problem. The Metropolitan has been fortunate in that the major portion of its contributed funds—from subscribers and patrons—has been unrestricted gifts applicable to general operating expenses. On the other hand, foundation grants (for the most part) and governmental funds have been directed at special activities and have usually required matching funds. Some of these grants have stimulated very exciting programs, but they have almost invariably paid only part of the actual costs of those programs.

The best way for foundations and government on all levels to insure that the arts will be available to the broadest possible public is for them to make grants to cover the general operating deficits of cultural institutions. Only then can these organizations be free to plan their activities on purely artistic grounds, without regard to the potential box office success of presentations. A number of hitherto foreclosed possibilities can then also be considered. Ticket prices can be designed to attract broader—and generally younger—audiences. A more varied and even adventurous repertory could be attempted if the need to sell out the house is eliminated. Other public interest programs can be planned and undertaken in an effort to develop new audiences. In short, a wide range of programming possibilities can be explored if the threat of financial disaster can be removed from our cultural institutions.

There have been a few indications recently that the National Endowment for the Arts is moving in the direction of general support grants rather than specific program grants. As will be seen in the following chapter, this type of support is the accepted norm in Europe and it functions smoothly. There is no reason to believe that it could not work in this country.

CHAPTER VIII

Government Support in Europe as Compared with the United States

The concept of government assistance to the arts is relatively new in the United States. In fact, it is only within the last six years that a meaningful program has been undertaken to aid the arts and humanities. In 1965 the National Foundation for the Arts and the Humanities was established as an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. The Foundation is composed of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities; each body has its own advisory council and formulates its own programs.

The funds appropriated by Congress to the National Endowment for the Arts in the first years of its existence were hardly sufficient for it to give substantial aid to those arts institutions in need of financial assistance. In December of 1969, however, President Nixon asked Congress to double the appropriation of the Foundation for 1971 from its existing level of $20 million to $40 million. The President's commitment to the philosophy that Federal assistance for the arts and humanities is not only legitimate but essential for the revitalization of the American spirit was further demonstrated by his request for a $60 million appropriation for the Foundation for 1972. That matter is now in the hands of the House Appropriations Committee.

To many Americans the concept of government support for the arts is still a novel one. Why can't private contributions pay for these cultural activities? Shouldn't those who derive the benefits of the arts pay for them? Even better, why can't the arts be self-supporting? Fortunately, most Americans today realize that it is no longer a question of private support or government support; it must be both. Private sources alone cannot today produce the amounts required if the arts are to be made available to a broad segment of the public and if performing artists at all levels are to be entitled to a reasonable standard of living and financial security.

There has been a "cultural explosion" in the United States in the last decade, and people are now very much aware of the fact that the arts are not just a peripheral activity but an integral part of their lives. Particularly among the young, there is new interest in art, poetry, dance, drama and music as a means of expressing ideas and emotions related to current social movements. Art has become "relevant." Yet the great works of the past continue to attract large numbers who want to maintain the links between their heritage and the present. Museum attendance has soared beyond the wildest dreams of museum directors—but so have the costs of operating these institutions. Orchestras and opera companies have expanded their seasons and taken on new programs in response to community pressures as well as their employees' demands for year-round engagements. The problem, however, is that more activities don't always mean more net income to the opera or symphony: in the case of the Metropolitan Opera, for example, the more performances, the greater the deficit! Each time the curtain goes up, the opera loses $16,000.

Almost all European countries have a long history of government support for their cultural institutions. Opera companies and theaters frequently began under the auspices of a member of royalty or the nobility, and no matter how many changes in government have occurred since then, state support for these institutions has continued. It is not even a political issue. Europeans tend to feel that cultural activities make an essential and irreplaceable contribution to human life and the general welfare, and therefore qualify for public support. Some theatrical and opera companies receive as much as 90% of their total income from government sources. Subsidy on such a scale makes it possible to offer low-price tickets, which in turn attracts a wider—and usually younger—audience. It has also been said that subsidy means greater freedom and opportunity to experiment than dependence exclusively on box office allows. Where the government makes up the difference between box office income and expenses (about 70% in Germany and as high as 90% in Sweden), it is much easier to plan a more adventurous repertory and not worry about selling tickets to works which are artistically worthwhile but have not yet had sufficient exposure to the public to be popular.

The Metropolitan Opera Association is the only major opera company in the world which does not receive substantial support for its operations from the government. This chapter will examine government support to the Vienna State Opera, the Hamburg Opera, the Munich Opera, the Royal Opera of Sweden and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and contrast such support with that being given to the Metropolitan Opera. Sufficient financial information for purposes of comparison is not available as to government support in other countries having famous opera companies, such as Italy with its renowned LaScala.

In the Metropolitan's 1968-69 season, 64% of its $17,424,000 of expenses were paid for out of box office income. The only direct government support received by the Metropolitan that year was $190,000 from the City of New York to help defray the costs of a specific activity—the free parks concerts. That subsidy represented only 1% of the Metropolitan's expenses. During the 1969-70 season, which was cut short due to the labor dispute, the Metropolitan Opera again received $190,000 from the City of New York to cover a portion of the costs (approximately 25%) of the four weeks of parks concerts. For the 1970-71 season, the Metropolitan Opera anticipates government support of

$553,000, consisting of a grant in the amount of $328,000 from the New York State Council on the Arts and $225,000 from the City of New York. Both grants are restricted for specific projects: the State Arts Council grant is given to support the parks concerts and upstate tours by the Metropolitan Opera Studio, while the City grant is given to support the parks concerts. The Metropolitan's expenses for the 1970-71 season are estimated at $20.0 million; government subsidies will support only 2½% of such expenses.

In contrast, government subsidies to each of the Vienna State Opera, the Hamburg Opera, the Munich Opera and the Royal Opera of Sweden have supported in excess of 66⅔% of expenses. In the case of Vienna, such annual subsidies are on the order of $4,500,000. In the case of Hamburg and Munich, such subsidies are approximately $5,100,000 for each, and in the case of the Royal Opera of Sweden, such subsidies will total around $6,000,000. Government subsidies for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (which covers both the Covent Garden Opera Company and the Royal Ballet), are on a smaller scale than government support for the continental opera companies—$3,120,000—and support approximately 42% of Covent Garden's expenses.

The opera companies of Sweden, Hamburg, Munich and Vienna are state companies and receive their funds from their respective federal (or, in the case of the German opera companies, Land) government. The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Limited, is a private company and receives its subsidy from the Arts Council of Great Britain, which is comprised of persons outside the government who have the task of allocating government funds to the arts.

The striking fact about such high levels of government support is that such support does not appear to have been accompanied by government intervention in the operation of these opera companies. Rolf Liebermann, the Intendant (director) of the Hamburg Opera, made the following observations in an interview conducted during the summer of 1963:

> "There is no discussion about the fact of providing subsidy to the opera today in any quarter; the only discussions are about the amount to be provided. The discussions are between the Ministry of Finance and me. I present my estimate, based on the previous year's experience with some additions—and it will be cut! They may tell me not to enlarge the ballet company by so many dancers in one year—do it over three years, etc. Then when we have agreed, we give the budget to Parliament. There is a 'debate' full of praise about the wonderful performances we have given . . . and then I don't hear a word from the government until the next time the budget goes in. They have faith in the men they choose to head these organizations—or they must get rid of them . . . there is never, never political interference—not in the theatre either. Of course, if the performances are artistically bad, then you'll be out. Only for that is there interference by the government. . . ."

In comparing the finances of the Metropolitan Opera with major Western Europe opera companies, a few other statistics should be compared. The Metropolitan Opera House is substantially larger than the major European opera houses, and this gives it an advantage in generating box office income. In terms of the number of seats, the Metropolitan Opera House is 3.3 times the size of the Royal Opera House of Sweden, 2.3 times the size of the Vienna State Opera House, 2.2 times the size of the Hamburg Opera House, 1.8 times the size of Covent Garden, and 1.75 times the size of the Munich Opera House. Of course, size is an advantage only if an opera company plays to a house which is full or nearly full. This does not always appear to be the case in Europe. For example, the Hamburg Opera's average box office receipts per performance are only 60% of what they would be if the house were filled to capacity. This contrasts with the Metropolitan's audience, which for the past ten years has on the average filled the house to 95% or more of capacity.

With one exception, the Metropolitan Opera employs far fewer performers and backstage help than do major Western European opera companies. The chart at the end of this chapter gives a detailed breakdown of the number of soloists and members of the chorus, ballet, orchestra and backstage help employed by each of these opera companies and the Metropolitan Opera. The exception is the number of soloists which the Metropolitan has under contract at any one time. The Metropolitan Opera has 3.7 times the number of principal artists under contract as Sweden, 2.3 times the number of Vienna, 2.2 times the number of Hamburg, 1.8 times the number of Covent Garden and 1.75 times the number of Munich. This is due to the Metropolitan's practice of covering solos "in depth."

An additional comparison which should be made is in the length of seasons, number of performances per season, the number of productions per season and

the number of new productions per season. These categories affect operating costs differently. The longer the season and the greater the number of performances per season, the larger the box office revenues. On the other hand, the greater the number of productions per season and, in particular, the number of new productions per season, the larger the operating expenses. The chart at the end of this chapter makes this comparison in detail. From this it is evident that the Metropolitan Opera has been more cost-conscious than the Western European opera companies under consideration. The length of season and number of performances per season are approximately the same for the Metropolitan as for the Vienna State Opera, the Hamburg Opera and Sweden. Yet Vienna and Hamburg have more than twice the current repertory of the Metropolitan. This larger repertory necessitates more costumes, sets, rehearsal time and more personnel and thus adds to costs. The number of performances per season of the Covent Garden Opera Company is approximately half the number for the Metropolitan, but the Covent Garden Opera Company's current repertory and its number of new productions per season are approximately the same as the Metropolitan Opera's.

The conclusion of this examination is that the Metropolitan Opera is probably doing more than the Western European opera companies under consideration in trying to hold down its variable costs by, among other things, running productions for longer periods of time and employing fewer people who perform supportive roles. At the same time the Metropolitan Opera has attempted to maintain its advantage in generating box office income by keeping its house substantially full. One area of hope is government support in which, as indicated above, the amount being currently provided to the Metropolitan Opera (2½% of expenses) is nowhere near the amount being provided in continental Western Europe (in many cases in excess of 66⅔% of expenses) or in England (approximately 40% of expenses in the case of Covent Garden).

SOME COMPARATIVE STATISTICS ON THE METROPOLITAN AND WESTERN EUROPE OPERA COMPANIES

1969-70 Figures Used, Except for Metropolitan Opera, Where 1970-71 Figures are Used

	Metropolitan	Covent Garden	Hamburg	Munich	Stockholm	Vienna
Size of House (no. of seats)	3973	2100	1679	2120	1147	1642
Length of Season	10 mos.	10¼ mos.	10½ mos.	11 mos.	10 mos.	10 mos.
No. of performances per season	292	152	275	356	301 (inc. ballet)	290
No. of productions per season	25	22	55	60	37	56
No. of new productions per season	4	4	7	12	11	5
Amount and Percent of budget covered by government subsidy	$553,000 (est) 2½%	$3 million 42%	$5.1 million 72%	$5.1 million 68%	$6 million 90%	$4.5 million 45%
Number of soloists	136	107	65	84	49	115
Chorus	78	69	135	102	73	107
Ballet	37	12	65	49	73	87
Orchestra	91	107	134	140	115	177
Backstage	240	247 (inc. staff)	302	359	412 (inc. staff)	365

Note: No attempt has been made to include the New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, Chicago Lyric or other American companies because their seasons are so much shorter than the Metropolitan's that no meaningful comparison can be made.

EPILOGUE

This White Paper has perforce dealt with money, administration, governmental policy, labor unions, fund raising, etc. In modern vernacular, it has not really dealt with the $64 question: Why have grand opera if it is so expensive? In reordering national priorities, maybe the Metropolitan Opera (and San Francisco, Chicago, Miami, Boston, Dallas and countless others) is not that important, so let it go down the drain?

The answer is that a great nation is entitled to great art. Indeed, some wonder if it does not go the other way around: a nation cannot be great unless its artistic and cultural assets meet the needs of its citizenry.

To conclude our White Paper, we quote below from two articles by Alan Rich, one of opera's most astute critics, on the subject of opera in general and the Metropolitan Opera in particular:

> ". . . by nature opera is a grandiloquent blending of the created masterwork and the contributed work of the artists in many fields who are entrusted with the task of bringing it to life, plus the immediate emotional impact of the human voice stretched to virtuosic extremes—and all this is what makes an evening in a great opera house the powerful civilizing force it is. Whether opera qualifies for that much used catchword *relevant* is in itself an irrelevant question. Certainly we can exist as a family of nations without our opera houses, but it is not the level of existence that man has worked toward over the past three milliennia." (*Cultural Affairs,* Winter 1970).

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> "An America without the Metropolitan Opera is unthinkable; it spreads its benefits far beyond its home at Lincoln Center, through its tours, its broadcasts and perhaps some day once again, its recordings. Yet, in the fall of 1969, the company came dangerously close to total eclipse. . . . And what happened at the Met was not an isolated near-disaster, but merely an orchestration of the shadow that overhangs every opera company and symphony orchestra in the land. . . ." (*Ibid.*)

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> ". . . There are certain nights of the season when the Met is untouchable, when singers, conductor and everyone else responsible for putting on grand opera in the grand manner interact to create an entertainment almost beyond descriptive words. When that happens, as it did on the first two nights of the current season, there isn't anything else about the company or its management that matters very much." (*New York* Magazine, October 5, 1970.)

* * * * * * *

The Metropolitan's technical crew installs the stage turntable.

The audience at one of the Metropolitan Opera Studio's school performances.

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UNIONS WITH WHICH THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HAS CONTRACTS

1. *American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA)*
   Principal artists, chorus, ballet, stage directors, stage managers and choreographers.

2. *Retail Clerks International Association, Local 1111 (AFL)*
   Cloak room attendants.

3. *American Federation of Musicians, Local 802*
   Orchestra, conductors, chorus master, prompters, rehearsal coaches, pianists.

4. *Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers, Local 18032 (AFL)*
   Press agent, house manager and company manager.

5. *Building Service Employees International Union, Local 54 (AFL)*
   Maintenance staff (porters, cleaners, security men) and front-of-the-house employees (ticket takers, ushers, matrons)

6. *International Alliance of Bill Posters, Billers and Distributors of the US and Canada (AFL) Local #2*

7. *International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 138*
   Libretti salesmen.

8. *International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 30*
   Engineers.

9. *Make-up Artists and Hair Stylists, Local 798 (IATSE, AFL-CIO, CLC)*
   Make-up artists and hair stylists.

10. *Theatrical Protective Union, Local 1 (IATSE)*
    Stage carpenters, stage prop men, electricians, carpenter shop and property shop employees.

11. *Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 4 (IATSE)*
    Stagehands in Maspeth, Queens, Warehouse.

12. *United Scenic Artists, Local 829*
    Scenic and costume designers, and scenic artists.

13. *Treasurers and Ticket Sellers, Local 751 (IATSE)*
    Box officer treasurers.

14. *Theatrical Wardrobe Attendants Union, Local 764*
    Costume shop and wardrobe staff.

METROPOLITAN OPERA STUDIO

TABLE I

PERFORMANCES AND AUDIENCES

	1969-70	1970-71*
1. NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES EACH YEAR		
Lincoln Center sponsored: Adult	7	4
Lincoln Center sponsored: Student	116	115
Non-Lincoln Center: Adult	15	31
Non-Lincoln Center: Student	22	75
2. ESTIMATED AUDIENCES		
Lincoln Center Adult	4,238	1,600
Lincoln Center Student	90,719	96,768
Non-Lincoln Center Adult	11,798	15,100
Non-Lincoln Center Student	21,800	40,588

*Figures for 1970-71 are based on projected performances and estimated audiences.

TABLE II

1. CITIES OF METROPOLITAN OPERA STUDIO PERFORMANCES IN NEW YORK STATE DURING THE 1969-1970 SEASON

Batavia
Bayshore (8)
Brentwood
Buffalo
Canton
Commack (4)
East Syracuse
Eldred
Fallsburg (2)
Farmingdale
Floral Park
Frankfurt
Fredonia (2)
Fresh Meadow
Germantown
Glens Falls
Hancock
Hauppauge (2)
Haverstraw
Kingston
Lake Ronkonkoma (2)
Liberty (4)
Lincolndale
Livingston Manor
Ludlowville
Massena
Massapequa
Monticello (9)
Montrose
New Paltz
New York City
  Brooklyn (24)
  Bronx (4)
  Manhattan (16)
  Queens (10)
  Staten Island (1)
Old Westbury
Orangeburg
Otego
Patchogue
Pawling
Philmont
Port Chester
Potsdam
Roscoe
Sidney
Spring Valley (2)
Suffern
Syracuse
Tarrytown
Thiells
Thornwood
West Islip
West Point
West Sayville
White Plains
Whitesboro

2. Cities Performed in Other than New York State During 1969-1970 Season

Connecticut
- Stamford

Illinois
- Chicago

Massachusetts
- Boston

New Jersey
- Atlantic City
- Blairstown
- Carney's Point
- Clifton
- Cranford
- Debtford
- Englewood
- Hammonton
- Jersey City
- Lawrenceville
- Millville
- Newfield
- Paulsboro
- Pennsville
- Saddle River
- Salam
- Sewell
- Swedesboro
- Vineland
- Williamstown
- Woodbury
- Woodstown

Pennsylvania
- Wyncote

Rhode Island
- Newport

Virginia
- Richmond

Washington, D. C.

Bermuda
- Hamilton

3. Cities of Metropolitan Opera Studio Performances in New York State During the 1970-1971 Season

Albany
Batavia
Beaver Falls
Bedford
Bellmore
Blauvelt
Boonville
Brentwood
Briarcliff Manor
Canastota
Callicoon
Cheektowaga
Croton-on-Hudson
Delmar
Eldred
Ellenville
Elmira
Fallsburg
Floral Park
Garden City Park
Grahamsville
Hauppauge
Haverstraw
Hicksville
Jeffersonville
Kingston
Lake Ronkonkoma
Liberty
Lincolndale
Little Falls
Livingston Manor
Lowville
Millbrook
Mineola
Monticello
Mount Vernon
Nanuet
Narrowsburg
Oneida
Oneonta
Patchogue
Philadelphia
Port Chester
Port Washington
Rockaway Park
Roscoe
Sayville
Schenectady
Sidney
Spring Valley
Suffern
Syracuse
Tarrytown
Thiells
Tonawanda
Unatego
Verona
Watertown
West Babylon
West Islip

4. Cities Performed in Other than New York State During 1970-1971 Season

Connecticut
- Bridgewater

Washington, D. C.

Kentucky
- Pikeville
- Bardstown

Massachusetts
- Boston

Maine
- Bar Harbor

New Jersey
- Atlantic City
- Parsippany

Rhode Island
- Newport

Vermont
- Bristol
- Newport
- Springfield

A view of the foyer of the Opera House.

Costumes and scenery are made in the Metropolitan's own workshops.

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